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THE CHILD OF MARY:

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A MELODRAMA IN THREE ACTS.

BY

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THE CHILD OF MARY.

CHARACTERS.

MICHAEL, GABRIEL, RAPHAEL, ABDIEL, RAMIEL, URIEL, ZOPHIEL, PHANUEL, EVE, THE MOTHER OF MANKIND; RACHEL, ELIAZAR, REBECCA, ESTHER, JUDITH.

ADA,
EVELINA,
AMELIA, } .....Children of MARY.

A number of Cherubs and of lower Angels; Pages; number of people.

ACT I.

SCENE FIRST.

A tableau. All the Angels mentioned above, rapt in contemplation and ecstasy. A soft, sweet, lulling strain of music is heard, as if from a distance. Suddenly it rises into a burst of joy and triumph. ADA, EVELINA, and AMELIA on another side, dressed in white robes, with a blue sash on which is written in golden letters "Child of Mary," lying down as if buried in sleep. At the burst of music the Angels return to consciousness by starting up all beaming with pleasure and gladness.

RAPH. Oh! God three times holy! What sweet feeling is this?

AB. Methinks a new heaven hath burst into my heart.

RAM. Aye, it is heaven intensified.

U. How good is the God to the loving soul!

ZOPH. My heart is nigh bursting with gladness. The joy running up from my inmost heart overflows my whole being and exhilarates and inebriates it.

PHANUEL. O Michael, tell us of this new wonder of God's magnificence.

GAB. Methinks we felt something like this once. When was it, Michael?

MICH. When the ineffable Godhead revealed to us the mystery of the coming of His Son and the matchless grandeur and dignity of His Mother.

GAB. Yes, I remember me. It was truly a festal day in heaven. The joy and gladness were past utterance, especially when all the hierarchies of heavenly spirits cast themselves on the ground and, with trembling and quivering hearts filled with awe and reverence, adored the Son of God who was to be the Son of Mary, and hailed Him the King of heaven and earth, and His peerless Mother the Queen of angels and men. The mere remembrance of it throws me into an ocean of bliss.

RAPH. And the feeling we experienced just now is akin to that which we enjoyed on that solemn occasion.

MICH. And therefore it is an earnest of that which will be required of us.

AB. What?

MICH. Something connected with the glory and service of the Blessed One among women. Will you do Her bidding?

All. We are ready to die for our Queen.

MICH. I will impart to you some knowledge of its import, and afterwards explain the share which each of you is to take therein. There are three human creatures here, buried in a deep, sweet slumber. Do you see that mysterious mark on the lovely brow of each?

All read and exclaim: Mary's Child.

MICH. Aye, Mary's Child! Happy are those to whom such privilege is granted. They are the apple of their Mother's eye. Look at those three. The lily of the field is not more pure and spotless than they. The pearl of maidenhood, like their Mother's, is their brightest ornament. Their soul is a sanctuary of innocence, of guilelessness, of simplicity and candor. Their heart is filled with the love for God and for their Mother. They move, live, and breathe in their Mother and for their Mother. They would only be too happy to yield their young life for Her. And She, the blessed among women, wishes to bestow some peculiar mark of favor upon them as a reward of their devotedness, and in order to captivate them more and more. Are you prepared to execute your Queen's commands?

All. We are.

SONG OF THE ANGELS.

Lo! how our God hath honored Mary,—
Her, the Father's chosen one,
The Holy Spirit's Sanctuary,
Virgin Mother of the Son!
Service love to Her be given—
Chorus. Queen of creatures, angels, heaven.

Through Christ the Lord, our God is saving
Creatures all who turn to Him.
The Universe His blood is laving;
Men and Angels lift the hymn—
Glory, laud our Saviour given!
Chorus. Sound on earth, in highest heaven!

And sweetly His dear Mother singing,
Men and angels join in praise;
While gladly, loving service bringing,
Lead we men in Her blest ways—
Mediatrix to us given,
Chorus. Humblest Virgin, Queen of heaven.

SCENE SECOND.

ADA, EVELINA, AMELIA, between sleeping and awaking.

ADA. What a lovely dream!

EV. What a celestial vision!

AM. What angelic strains!

ADA. (*Starting up and looking around.*) Where am I? Where are my companions? Oh, here they are. Awake, awake, sweet friends! My heart is full of happiness. It must out into your friendly bosom.

EV. O Ada, you know not what you have done. You have broken the spell of a most enrapturing vision.

AM. You have made me lose the lingering echoes of some divine strains.

ADA. Hush! Have you also been blessed in your slumber as I have?

EV. We have; but tell us first what you have seen.

ADA. Whether it was a vision or a dream I cannot tell; but methinks a crowd of the loveliest angels had gathered upon this spot; and they looked as if thrown into an ecstasy or rapture. Their faces and eyes appeared as if entranced, and a halo of the softest brilliancy and glory was round about them. They spoke at last, but their utterance was too lofty for me to comprehend. I stood with my eyes riveted on such lovely vision, when at once they glided away, leaving in my heart and soul a peace, a jubilee past expression.

EV. I saw the vision; for 'twas not a dream, but a vision. My God! what must Thy own Countenance be if angels' faces seen for a moment can fill our souls with such boundless delight! On departing, they have left after them a foretaste of paradise and a disgust for things earthly.

AM. Alas! I saw not the heavenly messengers. But I heard their melodies. Oh, to what shall I compare them? The softest and sweetest harmonies of earth are as discord when confronted with them. They stirred up the soul to its very depth; they searched it through and through; they

filled and overpowered it with the most exquisite delights; they melted it into liquid sweetness. Hark! I hear the last strain lingering yet upon the air, and it feels as if the combined scent and fragrance of a whole garden of flowers were wafted towards me upon the wings of a gentle breeze. (*Stops suddenly with a start.*) My God! what vision is this? (*All three fall prostrate on the ground.*)

Scene Third.

Enter the Archangels Gabriel, Raphael, and Uriel. The above.

G. Children of Mary, rise up. The shield of your mighty Mother is over you. The flood-gates of the most sublime favors are open for you. We come messengers and executors of Mary's gifts to you.

Ada. Sweet Mother Mary! Speak, dearest Archangel, and utter to Mary's lowliest and most affectionate children their Mother's intention.

G. You have prayed long and earnestly to know more and more of your Mother's noblest perfections and loftiest dignity, that you may cherish Her more and more. In the intensity of your heart's tenderness you have entreated that some day you may have the unutterable happiness to behold the Queen of heaven in Her peerless loveliness and beauty.

Ev. We have, in the childlike boldness of our love.

RAPH. That favor is granted. We are intrusted with its fulfilment.

AM. Angel of God! And how will that be accomplished?

RAPH. Would you recognize your Mother if you saw Her?

AM. Among millions of the loveliest and the best.

EV. *and* ADA. Yes, yes.

RAPH. And by what special marks would you know Her?

EV. She should tower above all women by an accumulation of perfections and loveliness, as the rising sun obscures all minor lights in the firmament. She should truly appear as the Immaculate, the Peerless, the Perfect One.

AM. And do you not think, dear Angel, that we should single Her out by Her matchless privilege, the brightest jewel in Her crown, the divine Motherhood?

URIEL. Yes, if your soul be pure.

ADA. And would not our own hearts, by their accelerated throbbing in the presence of our Mother, proclaim that blissful event?

G. Well, then we will start on a pilgrimage in search of your heavenly Mother and Queen. We shall traverse centuries and generations; pass in review all places and countries. We shall note every sign, every image, every portrait and figure of that stupendous Creature. We shall admire how the bountiful Giver of all gifts has filled heaven and earth with the loving images of your

Mother and made Her truly the object and the real business of all centuries. And if we fail not, we shall afterwards enjoy the sublime privilege of fixing our gaze upon Her celestial features. Let us offer up a prayer for guidance.

Glorious Light that streams from above,
Lead us, dear Lord, we pray;
Heavenly Wisdom, Power, and Love,
Guide us upon our way.

Seek we the True, the Good, and the Fair;
Lead Thou our steps aright!
'Mid all Thy works, without compare
Mary give unto our sight.

ACT II.

The scene represents on one side a beautiful garden with a gate. A cherub with a flaming sword is guarding the gate. Eve, in white garment and a black belt, is lying asleep against the gate. Two large angels and two smaller ones, as if weeping, are guarding her. On the other side ADA, EVELINA, AMELIA, and the three Archangels.

ADA. Ah me! our desire is not as yet fulfilled.

E. Blessed Angels, we have not seen our Mother as yet.

AM. Our longing is only more violent and impetuous.

G. You have seen Her already.

ALL. When, where? We have seen a beautiful vision, but nothing of our Mother.

RAPH. Tell what you have seen.

EV. It was majestic and sublime. It seemed as if we had been lifted up into heaven in a cloud of intensest light, so that our sight became dazzled. The cloud was dispelled, and we could see far, far into the innermost depths of the realms of heaven. The Eternal and the Ineffable was sitting upon the throne. This was made of angels' materials, and shone with the brilliancy of thousands of suns. Before and under the throne, at an immeasurable distance, there yawned an abyss dark, gloomy, empty. Perchance things were floating in that abyss, but the darkness was so thick and intense that nothing could be seen. When lo! the lips of the Eternal moved; the whole heaven was shaken to its foundation. But suddenly as under a flash of lightning the whole abyss was illumined with a soft, cheering light which allowed us to behold the whole earth covered with waters.

ADA. Then a separation followed. The waters were congregated, some above the earth, and some of one side. A veil of the softest and most lovely azure, as it were like a canopy, covered the earth. And through that azure so clear, so transparent, so buoyant, we could see numberless legions of stars studding the firmament and adorning it like a precious piece of wonderful tapestry.

AM. Then we saw part of the earth heaving and rising into hills and mountains, intersected by beautiful valleys, all of which became covered with

carpets of green of the softest texture. Then flowers sprang up of the most variegated shape and color. We saw the lily of the field, and the rose of Jericho, and the lowly violet, and the geranium, and the jessamine. Their fragrance was wafted to us by the morning breeze. Stately trees whose proud and haughty head reached the heaven, and whose arms extended far upon the earth, sheltered the flowers from the heat of the day. Then the whole air was filled with winged creatures, and the earth teemed with quickening animals. We were entranced at such galaxy of beauty. We felt as if born again to a new life. We looked far and near for our own beloved Mother. We failed to see a trace of Her. We were surrounded above and below and all around us by grandeur, beauty, and loveliness; but She . . . She was not there.

URIEL. She was there. In the light which God made, in the firmament, in the sun, in the moon, in the stars, in the earth, in the mountains, in the valleys, in the rivers and lakes, in the springs and streamlets, in every flower, in every shrub, in every plant, in every tree from the cedar of Lebanon to the lowly hyssop, in the sea, in every one of its inhabitants, in the creeping things of the earth, in every animal of nobler form and size, the Almighty was representing a perfection, a feature, a trait, a beauty, a charm of your Mother, the Queen of heaven and earth. Did you not see right before the throne a most luminous streak of light, set there by the Almighty Himself, at which

He was pleased to look every time a new creation was to appear? He seemed like an artist who is tracing a beautiful picture by imitating the model before him which himself has sketched, finished, and perfected.

All. We did.

U. That was your Mother's image which God formed before all, and which he took as a model for the creation of the universe.

G. But I see you are not as yet satisfied. Behold something better!

E. My God! what creature is that?

ADA. What beauty! what grace!

AM. Of a truth she is a masterpiece of Omnipotence.

G. Can you discover any trait of your Mother in her?

ADA. There is something motherly about her, but my childlike feelings run not towards her as trustingly and as affectionately. She cannot be my own heavenly Mother!

G. Let us draw nearer and see what those creatures of light who are hovering round about her can tell us. Look!

E. One of them hath written on her brow, *Departed Innocence.*

AM. And another, *Repentant Love.*

G. Yes; eternal thanks to the boundless mercy of God, she has obtained the grace of repentance and has been forgiven. She is filled now with a love steeped in sorrow and grief.

E. True. I can see it in her lovely brow; even

in slumber I can discover traces of anxiety and anguish. Her bosom heaves as if under the pressure of unutterable anguish.

ADA. But what does the other angel point at? Oh, how consoling! See those letters of gold which read—*My whole hope is in the coming of Her who is to be the best and fairest of my daughters.* What can that mean?

E. Dear angel, expound us the mystery of those hidden words.

AM. Tell us about this wondrous being.

G. She is the mother of mankind, *Eve.* Made perfect in nature and grace, assured of the continuation of those gifts for herself and her posterity, she preferred to forfeit all to listen to the deceitful voice of Satan, and to gratify her pride, her curiosity, and her sensuality. But the bountiful Creator took pity on her, and in view of the coming Mediator and His wondrous Mother, yielded her the grace of repentance and forgiveness.

SCENE SECOND.

The same. Eve starting up.

EVE. Yes, children of Mary, you were right in believing me a mother, for I am your mother as to nature. But as to grace and holiness, I brought you death. Your true Mother is my own most cherished, most dearly prized and worshipped Daughter. It is She of whom God spoke when He addressed the wily serpent on the fatal day of my fall: "I will put enmity between thee and the

woman, thy seed and Her seed; She shall crush thy head." That woman is your true Mother who has brought you forth to everlasting life. I am but a faint flickering image of that stupendous creature. I know you long to see Her; but centuries and generations shall succeed each other, images and types and personages innumerable, living portraits of her charms, must appear and pass away, ere She arise upon the horizon, as the morning dawn, beautiful as the moon, chosen as the sun, dreadful as an army in battle array, and as the harbinger of the coming Sun of Justice.

G. Mother of the living, you are endowed with prophetic spirit. Can you point out to these privileged children the figures and persons representing some perfection or gift of their Mother? They so delight to hear of the beloved of their souls!

E. I have some vision of the future, and will impart it to them. Children of Mary, gather around me, and look at your Mother's greatness. Do you see, down, down, far, far away, what is occurring upon the earth?

ADA. My God! the earth is flooded with water. The surging billows press upon each other with maddening fury. They rise upon the hills and mountains. All living beings, men, women, and children, are making desperate efforts to rise above the waves; even the feathered tribes have nowhere to rest their feet. I seem to hear the last cry of anguish and despair of those who perish. Alas! mankind is blotted out from the earth.

EVE. No; look better.

E. By the frequent flashes of lightning which break the darkness of the sky, I see something floating upon the waves. It battles its way through the fury of the storm; it sinks, it rises; it rides on defiantly and triumphantly.

EVE. It is the ark of my descendant Noah, which contains the remnant of mankind and living things that are again to people the earth. A day will come when the earth shall be flooded with the waves of error, of falsehood, of moral corruption. It will be on the point of perishing forever. But the Ark of the new Covenant, my own blessed Daughter, will appear, carrying the Saviour in Her immaculate womb, Who will save mankind. Look again, children.

AM. Oh, what a change! The waters have subsided; the rain has stopped; the ark is resting upon the peak of a mountain.

EVE. Look at the sky.

ADA. Oh, what a lovely rainbow! How bright and soft and cheering are its colors! What peace and rest that sight infuses into one!

EVE. It is another figure of your Mother which God has placed on high as a token that He will no longer afflict mankind with such a dreadful punishment, and as a harbinger of peace and reconciliation. How well does it express the prerogative of your Mother of being the mediator between the anger of Her divine Son and poor guilty men! How well does it portray that Her appearance is a token of pardon, peace, and reconciliation! But

here my vision ceases. Other creatures nearer to my blessed Descendant will unfold you more and more of Her grandeur and matchless privileges. But ere I go let me sing the praises of my future Daughter.

The mother of men hath evil wrought;
The Mother of Jesus safety brought;
While pride was the cause of sin,
See Mary, the lowly, win
Full graces, with every blessing fraught!

The mother of men their souls did kill;
The Mother of Christ did justice fill:
Eve wounded with fiery dart;
To heal wounds was Mary's part.
Oh, blessed is She who wrought God's will!

ACT III.

SCENE FIRST.

It represents a meadow. A well on one side. ELIAZAR, the servant of ABRAHAM, arrayed in the garb of an Arab. REBECCA with a pitcher to draw water.

E. I have sworn to my master to bring him a spouse for his son Isaac chosen from among his people. That vow I shall fulfil to the letter. (*Kneels down.*) "God, the Lord of my master, meet me to-day, I beseech Thee, and show kindness to my master. Behold, I stand nigh to the spring of water, and the daughters of the inhabitants of this

city will come to draw water. Now the maid to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher that I may drink; and she shall answer, Drink; and afterwards offer to give drink to my camels also,—she shall be the same whom Thou hast provided for Thy servant Isaac.

(*Enter Rebecca and goes up to the well.*)

E. What an exceedingly comely maid! What a virginal charm sits on her brow! Would that she were that chosen one! (*Goes up to her.*) My lovely maid, give me a little water to drink of thy pitcher. (*Rebecca rests the pitcher on her arm at once, and exclaims:*)

REB. Drink, my lord, and when thou hast drunk I will draw water for thy camels also.

E. (*Drinks.*) Thanks, dear maid. Whose daughter art thou?

REB. I am the daughter of Bathuel, Abraham's brother.

E. "Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who has not taken away His mercy and truth from my master, but has brought me the straight way into the house of my master's brother." Dear maid, will you let me put some little ornaments on your lovely person? (*Puts earrings on her, and bracelets on her arms. Rebecca retires.*)

SCENE SECOND.

Enter LABAN, BATHUEL, and REBECCA'S mother.

L. Come in, thou blessed of the Lord: why standest thou without? I have prepared the house

and a place for thy camels. (*All enter.*) Here is bread and meat to refresh yourself.

E. I will not eat till I tell my message.

B. Speak.

C. I am sent by my master to choose a spouse for his son Isaac from among his people. God, the Lord of my master, has pointed out to me that your lovely daughter is the chosen one. Now if you do according to mercy and truth with my master, tell me; but if it please you otherwise, tell me also, that I may go.

B. The word has proceeded from the Lord: we cannot speak other things to thee but His pleasure. Behold, Rebecca is before thee: take her and go thy way, and let her be the wife of thy master's son, as the Lord has spoken.

C. (*Distributes presents to all.*) Now stay me not, because the Lord has prospered my way; send me away, that I may go to my master.

MOTHER. Let us call the maid and ask her will. (LABAN *calls her.*) Wilt thou go with this man?

REB. I will.

B. May the Lord God of Abraham bless thee, my daughter, and thy spouse Isaac; and may He bless your children and your children's children till He come Who is to be sent, and Who is to be the expectation of nations.

REB. (*Takes leave of her relations.*) Father, mother, wonder not that I can so easily part from you to go among strangers. I start with my own free consent—nay, with joy and con-

tentment; because I foresee my destiny, and am thankful that it has fallen to my lot. A mighty voice in the very midst of my heart cries, louder than I can tell, that I shall be wedded to one of the first of the Princes and Patriarchs of our people, shall have the best love of my spouse, and shall be the happy parent of two mighty children, the younger of whom shall be the great sire of Him Who is to be the Saviour of our nation, the King and Ruler of the world, and the Father of all future generations of true faithful. This gives me courage, nay gladness, to leave you. Farewell; I go to accomplish a sacred and lofty duty.

Scene Third.

The Children of Mary and the Angels.

G. What think you of the vision which has just departed?

A. Beautiful indeed, and very touching!

Eve. But it told us nothing of our Mother.

G. How! did you fail to discover the mystery therein portrayed? It was the counterpart of that which is to come, and which shall be the crowning glory of your Mother. A day will come when I, Gabriel, shall be intrusted by the Eternal Father with the hallowed mission of finding for Himself a Spouse, for His son a Mother, and for the Holy Spirit a sanctuary of predilection, even as Eliazar was intrusted by Abraham with the charge of finding a bride for his son. I shall look for the only blessed among women, and shall find Her filled to overflow with the sweet fountains of

grace. I shall hail Her as Full of grace. I shall ask Her consent to the exalted and lofty dignity of Bride, Mother, and Sanctuary of the Godhead and the parent of all the generation of believers. Why, what you have seen done by Eliazar I shall do on the day of the Annunciation! And would you wish a better image of the greatest mystery in your Mother's life?

AM. We understand now. The whole vision before us represented the wonders of the Annunciation.

G. Aye. And now stand on this spot, and I will point out to you all the great matrons who represent some perfection of your Mother. (*Enter* RACHEL, *and passes slowly.*) Here is Rachel, the graceful and lovely bride of Jacob, a picture of the spiritual charms of Mary.

(*Enter* ESTHER, *arrayed in queenly garments, with a gold crown and pages bearing her train.*)

EVE. Dear Angel, who is that majestic queen? —for every step and every movement proclaim her a queen.

G. She is Esther, the bride of the King of Assyria and Babylon. She saved, by her entreaties to the king, her own people from destruction. A figure of the mighty power Mary wields with the King of heaven on behalf of Her children.

ADA. But look! here is another grand sight— a noble matron followed by a great multitude of people. Hark! let us hear what they say. (*Cries:*) "Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel, thou art the honor of our people."

G. That noble matron is, Judith, the deliverer of her people from the yoke of their enemies. Joy and contentment are lit upon her countenance whilst the people proclaim her Blessed. And need I remind you that she is the figure of our Lady, who has delivered the Christian people from the yoke of Satan. The shouts of joy and praise and thanksgiving of the Bethulians are but a faint echo of the hymn, the song, the canticle, which every generation of Christians from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof shall raise to the honor and glory of their spotless, their magnificent Mother.

ALL. Truly, yes, all generations shall call Her blessed.

G. And now, children it is time that we should return to Him Who sent us. It is time that we should resume our perennial canticle before His Throne. Have you learned enough of your Mother?

ADA. We have; but a trace of Her footsteps would have been bliss indeed.

G. Children, it is given to me to offer you the choice: Will you get a glimpse of your Mother and die—for none could stand the mighty vision and live; or will you sacrifice that privilege, and by imitating your Mother's virtues, Her faith, Her obedience, Her humility, Her purity, Her devotion, become yourself a portrait, an image, a figure of your Mother, and thus help to make Her known, esteemed, loved, cherished, by others? Which will you choose?

CHILD. To become a loving image of Her, and wait Her pleasure for the vision of Her presence.

G. I expected no less from true children of Mary. Let us go.

ADA. Dear Angel, the next instant you will be in the presence of our Mother. Don't forget to bring Her our love.

EVE. Happy, happy Angel! will you imprint on Her sacred feet a thousand kisses for me?

AM. And will you double your homage and worship towards Her, to compensate our beloved Mother for our absence till we join you in heaven?

ARCHS. We will indeed.

G. And now, before we part, let us invite all angels, all Mary's images, to join us in a canticle, until we take it up all together in heaven in an endless strain. (*Sing the Ave Maria.*)

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